

T. 564. 14

THE  
WIZARD'S CAVE;

A Northumbrian Legend.

BY ROBERT OWEN, ESQ.

---

NEWCASTLE:

M. A. RICHARDSON, 44, GREY STREET.

MDCCCXLIV.

\*



## THE WIZARD'S CAVE.

&c.

---



THE Wizard's Cave" is from the pen of Robert Owen, Esq., a native of North Shields. Like a true Northumbrian, Mr. Owen was passionately fond of the Tales and Legends of the Border, and made an extensive collection of them, towards a work which he planned and intended to publish, under the name of "*The Minstrelsy of the English Border*." Owing to ill health and other causes, the design was abandoned, and Mr. Owen, during the progress of Hone's Table Book, placed at the disposal of the editor of that work, a considerable portion of the *materiel* he had collected and written. Such was the origin of "the Wizard's Cave," a very pleasing ballad in true minstrel strain.

The author of it is now a resident in a distant clime; should our work ever come to his hands, we doubt not that he will be gratified at finding that *his* idea as to an English Border Minstrelsy, has, to a certain extent, been carried out by other hands, and that in the pages of the present publication, an attempt—and we trust not an unsuccessful one—has been made to collect the scattered legends and tales, of a considerable portion of the *English Border*.

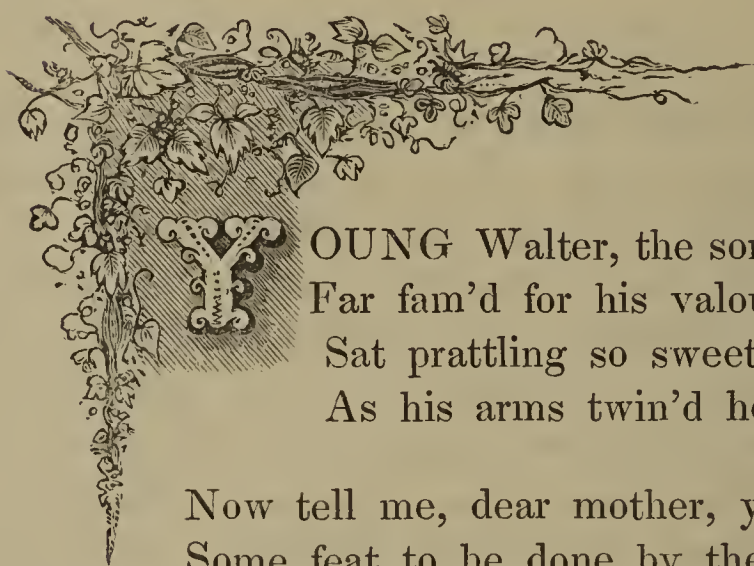
The tradition of the "*Wizard's Cave*" is as familiar to the inhabitants and visitors of Tynemouth, as "household words." A few years ago, during the summer season, even fair damsels might be seen risking their slender necks, to ascertain, by adventurous exploration, whether young Walter the Knight might not, in his hurry, have passed over some of the treasures of the Cave: but, alas! Time on this, as on other things, has laid his heavy hand; for the falling in of the rock and earth, and peradventure the machinations of the discomfited "spirits," have, one or both, stopped up the dark passage of the



cavern, at the depth of ten or twelve feet, The entrance of the cave, now well known by the name of "*Jingling Geordie's Hole*," is partly formed by the solid rock, and partly by masonry, and can be reached with some little danger, about half way up the precipitous cliff, on which Tynemouth castle and priory stand. It commands a beautiful haven, or sandy bay, on the north of Tynemouth promontory, badly sheltered on both sides by fearful beds of black rocks, on which the ocean beats with a perpetual murmur.

D.

### THE WIZARD'S CAVE.



YOUNG Walter, the son of Sir Robert the Knight,  
Far fam'd for his valour in border-fight,  
Sat prattling so sweet on his mother's knee,  
As his arms twin'd her neck of pure ivory.

Now tell me, dear mother, young Walter said,  
Some feat to be done by the bow or the blade,  
Where foe may be quell'd or some charm be undone;  
Or lady, or treasure, or fame may be won.

The lady, she gaz'd on her war-born child,  
And smooth'd down his ringlets, and kiss'd him, and smil'd;  
And she told him high deeds of the Percy brave,  
Where the lance e'er could pierce, or the helm-plume wave,

And she told him wild tales, all of magic spell,  
Where treasures were hidden in mountain or dell;  
Where wizards, for ages, kept beauty in thrall  
'Neath the mould'ring damp of their dank donjon wall.

—But list thee, my Walter, by Tinmouthe's towers grey,  
Where chant the cowl'd monks all by night and by day;  
In a cavern of rock scoop'd under the sea,  
Lye treasures in keeping of Sorcery.

It avails not the Cross, ever sainted and true,  
It avails not the pray'rs of the prior Sir Hugh,  
It avails not, O dread! Holy Virgin's fond care,  
Great treasure long held by dark Sathan is there.

Far, far 'neath the sea, in a deep rocky cell,  
 Bound down by the chains of the strongest spell,  
 Lies the key of gold, countless as sands on the shore,  
 And there it will rest 'till old time is no more.

Nay, say not so, mother, can heart that is bold  
 Not win from the fiend all this ill-gotten gold?  
 Can no lion-soul'd knight, with his harness true,  
 Do more than cowl'd monks with their beads e'er can do?

Now hush thee young Walter, how like to thy sire!  
 Thy heart is too reckless, thine eye full of fire:  
 When reason with courage can help thee in need,  
 I will tell how the treasure from spell may be freed.

Full many a long summer with scented breath,  
 Saw the flowers blossom wild on the north mountain heath;  
 And the fleetest in chase, and the stoutest in fight,  
 Grew young Walter, the son of Sir Robert the Knight.

Full many a long winter of sleet and of snow,  
 Swept through the cold valleys where pines only grow;  
 But heedless of sleet, snow, or howling blast,  
 Young Walter e'er brav'd them, the first and the last.

Who is that young knight in the Percy's band?  
 Who wieldeth the falchion with master hand?  
 Who strideth the war-steed in border fight?  
 ——'Tis Walter, the son of Sir Robert the Knight!

Thy promise, dear mother, I claim from thee now,  
 When my reason can act with my blade and my bow;  
 But the lady she wept o'er bold Walter her son,  
 For peril is great where renown can be won.

And the lady she told what to brave knights befell,  
 Who reckless of life sought the dark treasure-cell;  
 Who failing to conquer the fiends of the cave,  
 For ever must dwell 'neath the green ocean wave.

No tears the bold bent of young Walter could turn,  
 And he laugh'd at her fears, as in veriest scorn—  
 ——Then prepare thy good harness, my bonny brave son,  
 Prepare for thy task on the eve of Saint John.



O loud was the green ocean's howling din,  
 When the eve of Saint John was usher'd in :  
 And the shrieks of the sea-gulls, high whirling in air,  
 Spread far o'er the land, like the screams of despair.

The monks at their vespers sing loud and shrill,  
 But the gusts of the north wind are louder still ;  
 And the hymn to the Virgin is lost in the roar  
 Of the billows that foam on the whiten'd shore.

Deep sinks the mail'd heel of the knight in the sand,  
 As he seeks the dark cell, arm'd with basnet and brand ;  
 And clank rings the steel of his aventayle bright,  
 As he springs up the rocks, in the darkness of night.

His plume it is raven, and waves o'er his crest,  
 And quails not the heart-blood that flows in his breast :  
 Unblench'd his proud eye that shines calm and serene,  
 And floats in the storm his bright mantel of green.

Now leaping, now swarving the slipp'ry steep,  
 One spring and the knight gains the first cavern keep ;  
 The lightnings flash round him with maddening glare,  
 And the thunderbolts hiss through the midnight air.

Down deep in the rock winds the pathway drear,  
 And the yells of the spirits seem near and more near,  
 And the flames from their eye-balls burn ghastly blue,  
 As they dance round the knight with a wild halloo.

Fierce dragons with scales of bright burnished brass,  
 Stand belching red fire where the warrior must pass  
 But rushes he on with his brand and his shield,  
 And with loud shrieks of laughter they vanish and yield.

Huge hell-dogs come baying with murd'rous notes,  
 Sulphureous flames in their gaping throats ;  
 And they spring to, but shrinks not, brave Walter the Knight,  
 And again all is sunk in the darkness of night.

Still down winds the warrior in pathway of stone,  
 Now menac'd with spirits, now dark and alone ;  
 Till far in the gloom of the murky air,  
 A pond'rous lamp sheds unearthly glare.

Then eager the knight presses on to the flame,  
 Holy mother!—Why shudders his stalwart frame?  
 A wide chasm opes 'neath his wond'ring view,  
 And now what availeth his falchion true.

Loudly the caverns with laughter ring,  
 And the eyeless spectres forward spring:  
 Now shrive thee young Walter, one moment of fear,  
 And thy doom is to dwell 'neath the ocean drear.

One instant Sir Walter looks down from the brink  
 Of the bottomless chasm then ceases to shrink;  
 Doffs hauberk and basnet, full fearless and fast,  
 And darts like an eagle the hell-gulf past.

Forefend thee, good knight, but the demon fell  
 Now rises to crush thee from nethermost hell;  
 And monsters most horrible hiss thee around,  
 And coil round thy limbs from the slimy ground.

A noise, as if worlds in dire conflict crash,  
 Is heard 'mid the vast ocean's billowy splash;  
 But it quails not the heart of Sir Robert's brave son,  
 He will conquer the fiend on the eve of St. John.

He seizes the bugle with golden chain,  
 To sound it aloud once, twice, and again;  
 It turns to a snake in his startled grasp,  
 And its mouthpiece is arm'd with the sting of the asp.

In vain is hell's rage, strike fierce as it may,  
 The Wizard well knows 'tis the end of his sway;  
 For the bugle is fill'd with the warrior's breath,  
 And thrice sounded loud in the caverns of death.

The magic cock crows from a brazen bill,  
 And it shakes its broad wings, as it shouts so shrill;  
 And down sinks in lightning the demon array,  
 And the gates of the cavern in thunder give way.

Twelve pillars of jasper their columns uprear,  
 Twelve stately pillars of crystal clear,  
 With topaz and amethyst sparkles the floor,  
 And the bright beryls stud the thick golden door.

Twelve golden lamps, from the fretted doom,  
 Shed a radiant light through the cavern gloom,  
 Twelve altars of onyx their incense fling  
 Round the jewell'd throne of an eastern king.

It may not be sung what treasures were seen,  
 Gold heap'd upon gold, and emeralds green,  
 And diamonds, and rubies, and sapphires untold,  
 Rewarded the courage of Walter the Bold.

A hundred strong castles, a hundred domains,  
 With far spreading forests and wide flowery plains,  
 Claim one for their lord, fairly purchased by right,  
 Hight Walter, the son of Sir Robert the Knight.

